

V. F. BELIAJUS

As far as his pedigree was concerned, he had none to boast about, save the fact that he was not like the usual run of alley cats. Nooky had been born and had spend his first few weeks until weaned under a roof of a respectable Kosher family who had a fruit market on our block. Thus, he was born under a roof and not in an alley. During his second week, when moved to the new place where the "Folk Dancers Nook" was established, the kitten was presented to us. Kazy and I named him "Nooky" in order to associate him with the Folk Dancers Nook.

Nooky became an integral part of the "Nook", the mascot of the place. He recognized his position and his duties and what was expected of him and began to practice hospitality and friendliness toward all. And everybody's friend did he become. Playfulness, cleverness and grace were his virtues. All the guests expressed an immediate liking for Nooky. There was nothing striking about him, a small gray and white kitten. (His grayness was of the Ma'tese type, and the white spots were immaculately white). His eyes were dreamy and thoughtful. Once he laid his glance upon you, you could not help but take him up in your arms and exclaim affectionately, "Hello, Kitten!".

Nooky could climb the highest places, sometimes to such heights that we wondered how in the world he ever got there; yet, even though he could execute such feats, he never molested nor frightened the love birds, Jurgis and Ona, who chirruped in their cage. Nor did he climb into the niche where a shrine to Shiva was placed with so many breakable and "hard-to-get" bric-a-brac, for he realized that these things were not to be touched.

Most amusing was he during the Saturday Night programs, when certain national were presenting the folk dances and folk songs of their native lands to an interested audience. Nooky knew that the people were gathered there for entertainment; he, too, felt that it was his duty to entertain guests. Thus, between numbers (never did he make an appearance during the presentation of a number, only either between or after the program), he was wont to walk gracefully onto the space reserved for programs and do some trick of his own. Upon reaching the center of the floor he would jump to a height of about two feet, do some kittenish flips or hasty zig-zag runs that would evoke laughter on every side; if however out of tricks, he would merely walk to the center of the room and stretch himself out to the full length of his small body and lie that way. It was no wonder that everyone came to like the kitten, was anxious to pet him or play with him. The feminine guests loved to have him lie upon their laps, and he liked it too, in fact he preferred a maiden's lap, for her touch was warm and tender and pleasing to him. And even upon her lap he was wont to do some little trick that endeared him. It might be a certain glance of his eye, a movement of his paw or a wave of his tail, but he knew how to win everybody's heart.

Often I watched the ways of the cat, I especially enjoyed the ritual of face-washing. As he sat on three paws, the fourth paw was in a continuous circular movement about his tongue and on to the part to be washed. The movement was so perfect, so smooth, so circular and graceful that I murmured: "Dievulēliau—Dear God! How wonderful are your ways!"

His meowing was also rare, it was rather a singing type of a voice, learned perhaps from the various folk song singers. When we were at the table eating, he too came to eat his portion which he swallowed without ceremony and was through before Kazy and I were. He approached

the table and let out a musical "voce forza" "meouw". We told him "Eik šalin!" or "Tylėk" which means "scram" in the vernacular. (We spoke to our pets in Lithuanian. We also had a Persian cat, Rudi (Brownie) and a Maltese dog, Skippy.) He would scam, but only to the kitchen door and turn right back with perhaps a stronger "Fortisimo" note. Occasionally he would not obey our "scram" but would respond immediately with his "voce forza".

On the 22nd of November (1940), our kitten took ill. We did not know what the trouble might be. Poor animals can't tell us of their pains and ailments. We consulted druggists and good neighbors. The kitten indicated spasms of a type that poisoning would produce. We could not imagine who would have such a callous heart as even to think of poisoning an innocent and helpless kitten—and we thought we had guarded her most jealously. The kitten suffered helplessly and I stood by helpless and forlorn, not knowing what I could do. My heart was breaking to see him suffer. I took him into my arms whispering "Kas tau yra, Nukuti mano?" (What is the trouble, my dear little Nooky?). He looked at me with those sweet and lovely eyes in a pitiful manner that caused my own eyes to water. I watched his body grow cold and rigid, his eyes set and glaze. Poor little Nooky, may your feline soul rest in peace.

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BOLDOG KARACSONYI IS UJEVI UNNEPEKET
KIVANOK
GYPSY MARITZA
LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA

STOCKTON REUNION IN OREGON

By John Hancock

On October 16th and 17th there was a Stockton Folk Dance Camp Reunion going on in Portland, Oregon; for Oregon, Washington and Idaho. Seeing how it is so far to Fresno, especially for just a weekend, we decided to have our own. Having it the week before California's would let anyone so desiring go to both or either.

The Reunion was held at the Eastside W.O.W Hall in Portland. Starting Saturday nite at 8 o'clock four of the camp dances were taught, with other dances thrown in. The four dances and teachers were: Sardana by John Hancock, Bunievachko Momachko Kolo by Don Benedict, Rhungo by Art Gibbs and the Apple by Vivian Stone. The dances were well presented and well received by the group. The dancing finally broke up around 1:30 - 2:00 A. M., during which period many more of the camp dances were done. A group of around 75 dancers were present coming from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Ohio and California.

Sunday's program was an "all request" program with about the same number of people showing up. The program started at 1:30 and ran until 5 o'clock. Here again many of the Stockton dances were done some of which were: Gerakina, Martinique Mazurka, King Sailor, Steiregger, Oberek, Kritikos, Srbianka, Castell Ter Sol, Bo Dodi, Stack of Barley, Cor Beirte and of course the four that were taught the night before.

This was the first time anything like this has happened up here and I think it went over very well, and everyone enjoyed themselves. Carol Mayer and John Hancock were chairman and co-chairman with the help of Francis Kies, Hildred Rice and Jim Tomlin. I hope this perpetuates itself into a annual affair with as much success if not more than we had this year.

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On the North-Eastern section of the Iberian Peninsula live the Catalans, whose capital city is Barcelona. Catalonia is an ancient nation. It has its own language and its own rich folklore. Said Trini Borrull in her "Danza Espanola." That region is one of the richest in folklore. The number of existing dances is numerous. It has a characteristic stamp which distinguishes it from all other dances (in Spain)." But of all the Catalan dances it seems that the Sardana caught the attention of the dance students. Every historian of the dance will mention the Sardana, not always correctly, but the impact of the Sardana is important enough to have it included. There were no other dances which merited so much printing space as had the Sardana, a dance of a seemingly obscure people which are now ruled by Spain and France. By the same token, the Sardana evoked more arguments and contradictions which leaves a student upon reading all the sources and never having been in Catalonia, greatly confused.

The Sardana is the life-line of the Catalonians. More than anything else this dance alone kept the people alive as much. This is their inspiration and their hope. Enric Morera, Catalonians foremost Sardanist said: "It is a Dance, a Hymn, a Song; it is Catalonia." No one but a Catalonian will appreciate the truth of this statement. The English historian John Langdon Davies in his "Dancing Catalans" (London, 1929, which, by the way, is a book which all who are interested in the Catalonians, MUST read), described:

"The alien observer, who has sat day after day under the midday sun . . . Gradually sees more than a popular dance as he watches the Sardana . . . day after day, the same actions, stereotyped, anticipated . . . the music and the rhythmic dances, the circles moving to left and right, slowly, constantly, seriously . . . and the dance is not what we would call a dance . . . here men have not come to meet girls, nor are the girls' buzzing with thoughts about men as such, all together are responding to another feeling, the feeling of being one of the group; the Sardana is a communal ceremony, a social ritual . . . the symbol that one ant needs all the other ants in the anthill. Why, we wonder, is dancing in this Mediterranean an expression of . . . group interest, while in the cold north . . . it is a sex instinct . . . ?"

The same wonderment was also expressed by Trini Borrull in her "Danza Espanola," "... Thousands of groups of youths dance it assiduously in the plazas, streets and parks of the entire region. One feels in this dance an obsession among those who practice it whose immense attractiveness would be impossible to comprehend by those who ignore its theory." (Translated from the Spanish.)

But Dictator Primo de Rivera sensed this obsession. The display of the catalan flag was prohibited, as was their national hymn. To study Catalan in the school and University was also prohibited. Nothing helped, thus, finally, the dancing of the Sardana was forbidden. Rivera since has died, but the Catalan people and their Sardana are still very much alive.

The Sardana is an ancient form of dance. Until recently is used to be performed on holidays in front of the church, and led by the Priest in honor of the Passions of Christ. I do not suscribe, however, to the

theory that it had its origin in Greece and their Syrtos. The relationship between the Sardana and a Syрто is as far fetched as between a Jota and a Kazatski. There is a great number of much closer related dances in other vastly removed parts of the world and they are not claiming kinship, nor could this be attributed to Greece, but something that is equally as old. However, it is much more romantic to claim descent from ancient Greece.

Up until a hundred years ago there must have been an endless number of Sardanas. Curt Sachs in his "World History of the Dance" claims that the "Catalonians in their Sardana (were) knocking one another's hats off with their feet. (p. 29)" He also claims that "the Catalan introduces his national dance, the Sardana, with a contrapas, a quick, vigorous round dance in which there is much leaping and crossing." These mentioned things are no more done, for, Old Man Pep Ventura, an obscure taylor, came along and became immortalized by standardizing (to an extent) the Sardana. This standardization took place about 1840. Besides Pep Ventura he was joined by N'Antoni Toron, musician, and Miguel Pargas who was the musical composer and notator. The three standardized not only the dance but also manner of composition of music and what instruments are to play for the Sardana dancing. Nonetheless, there are still several versions in existence, the two of which are the basic variations, the Empordanes which starts moving to left and the Selvata, which starts the dance moving to right, otherwise, there is no difference in manner of count between the two. In Gerona, the center of Sardanaland, they dance either way. Some exhibition groups may try to dress up the execution of the step in order to make it seem more stagy, but there is very little dressing up one can do, no matter how ballet looking one will try to point their toes.

The hardest part of the Sardana is not the execution of the step but the number of steps and the "musts" of directions depending which Sardana one does. It is truly a mathematical problem. It hardly seems possible that a so comparatively simple dance would become so involving. It is a headache to figure it out and the best thing to do is just "follow the crowd." Says John Langdon-Davies in his "Dancing Catalans" (p. 51).

"It is astonishing to meet with such a complicated mental exercise in a popular dance in the world, and the Sardana is probably unique in this respect. Of course, the reader must not imagine that every dancer takes the trouble to count; a warning hand-squeeze sent around the circle from the experts suffices for the most of them; but the astonishing thing is that so many of them do actually count every step throughout the ten minutes of music."

THE SYNOPSIS OF THE SARDANA

The synopsis of the Sardana as set down by Pep Ventura, Turon and Pardas would follow this sequence:

1. The flaviol plays six (or so) measures of introduction.
2. Corts (Shorts; about 24 to 25 sets).
3. Corts again as above to end in an even count.
4. Llargs (longs) about 64-65 counts.
5. Llargs once again, total for both of 130 counts.
- 6 & 7. The same as 2 and 3.
- 8 & 9 The same as 4 and 5.
10. A "Contrapunt," a measure or so of flaviol playing during which period the dancers pause.
11. A repetition of one section of llargs (about 65 counts.)